

National Marine Conservation Areas: Proposals for a Federal Government Program Structure on the Pacific Coast of Canada

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Abstract

The government of Canada enacted legislation in 2002 to establish a system of National Marine Conservation Areas in Canada (NMCA). Based on a review of the program information and a literature review of the management concept prescribed for the program, criteria are identified for a federal program structure that could administer the management and use of NMCA. A subsequent review of existing federal programs and services against the identified criteria is used to formulate proposals for a federal government NMCA program structure on Canada's Pacific coast.

The review identifies ecosystem-based management, sustainable use, and the precautionary principle as the essential elements of the management concept prescribed for NMCA program. Highlighted are some of the challenges in designing and implementing a program structure for the NMCA program. Through the information reviews and concurrent interviews with department and agency representatives, federal programs and services that could support the NMCA program on the Pacific coast are identified. Considering this information and the implications of the literature review, proposals are presented for an NMCA program structure. An ethical approach is used to present the proposals in this paper as a means to initiate an informed dialogue between the respective federal agencies for the NMCA program on the Pacific coast.